

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, October 22, 1842, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO ANDREW JACKSON, JR.

Silver Spring, Md. , October 22, 1842 [1845].

My Dear Sir; I waited until my son's return to assure you of the safe arrival of the venerable Chief's papers, before answering your letter in regard to them. They are all now under my roof and will (after being 0187 163 bound up under my own supervision in Volumes) be carefully lodged in a Bookcase appropriated to them alone, and to be preserved to the remotest posterity.

I am exceedingly anxious to get possession of those in Mr. Kendall's hands and those at Major Donelson's. The Major when here told me that he would either himself look over the mass at his house or get you to do it and have forwarded all that were important. As I have nothing to do during the long winter approaching, I think it would be well to send me the whole mass. I will winnow it perfectly and if there be found anything useful either to you or Major Donelson I can separate it and hand it over to the Major when he comes on. I wish you would see the Major (or write to him if he has left home) and make some arrangement so that my son Judge Blair 1 may come by the Hermitage between the 15th of November and the first of December and bring them to me. There are some very important papers among them, the rough draft of many official papers containing much to his honor (the Generals), which reasons of state suppressed in the public document as prepared for the exigency, and there is much in them to illustrate the history of his presidency. As the Major voluntarily named you as the person who

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would separate his Uncle's from his own papers in case of absence or other cause preventing him I hope you will attend to it at once if his avocations should call him off.

1 Montgomery Blair, of St. Louis.

As to those in the power of Mr. Kendall there will be no way of getting them but through you. I wish you would write to him therefore and ask him whether the period he has fixed in his notification in the Union for the completion of this work will be sufficient to enable him to avail himself of the contents of the papers he has in his hands. If not ask him if six months beyond that period would suffice and tell him that at the end of that period you wish him to deliver them over to me, to bind up in their proper place in the papers which I am about to arrange for that purpose, Assuring him at the same time that he shall have copies of any particular ones he may designate made at my expense, and have access to the whole collection when put together by me, which will be lodged under the care of a proper person at Jackson Hall. You may write to him also that I will make no proposals for the publication of any work to compete with his for a year at least after the period at which he proposes now to give his complete work to the press. In fact I am ready to enter into any engagement to secure to him the full benefit of the edition he may be about to publish without doing anything to injure the sale provided he will fix some reasonable period for its production. I sincerely wish him to make a good work of it and make the most of it before the fuller and more elaborate publication contemplated by me is suggested to the public mind. I wish you would submit this view of things to him as from yourself and as a matter you have a right to insist upon for your father's sake, and as rightfully to be expected from both him and me and please to communicate his reply with your letter to me.

It delights me to read the resolutions you have made and the great step you have taken to make yourself worthy of inheriting the name and the fortune of your father and the affections of the country which have been bequeathed by the greatest and best man of any age, to you. His will shows the confidence and love he bore towards you as well as

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your charming and excellent wife. If you show the world how much you deserve, by a life of piety and a course of conduct fulfilling the trust he reposed in you, 0188 164 the nation's gratitude to him will attach to you and your children and their posterity will feel its effects in the public honors paid them.

I have a request to make of Mrs. Jackson which I hope she will grant. I must beg of her some little article associated with the General's person which I may wear as a talisman on my own. When I was shooting with you at the Hermitage he furnished me a pair of long sighted spectacles with which he viewed objects at a distance. When I returned and told him how well I saw with them he desired me to keep them, but I would not deprive him of the use of them. If Mrs. Jackson would now send them to me or a sleeve button or any small thing worn by him it would be gratefully remembered by Dear Andrew.

Your Most Affectionate friend

We all send love to Mrs. Jackson and the children; and hope next summer that she and you will come and see Silver Spring.

P. S. My nerves of my arm are so weakened by a severe attack of cold that I have had for some days that to make my letter readable I have used my Son in-Law's hand.

I would suggest that it would be well if you can obtain the papers at Major Donelsons, that you would write immediately to my son Judge Blair at St. Louis, inviting him to come by the Hermitage to bring them on. I have written to him to that effect, but an invitation from you would be sure to take the Hermitage route. It would be well too to make him the medium of communication with Kendall about the transfer of the papers as the General himself did.